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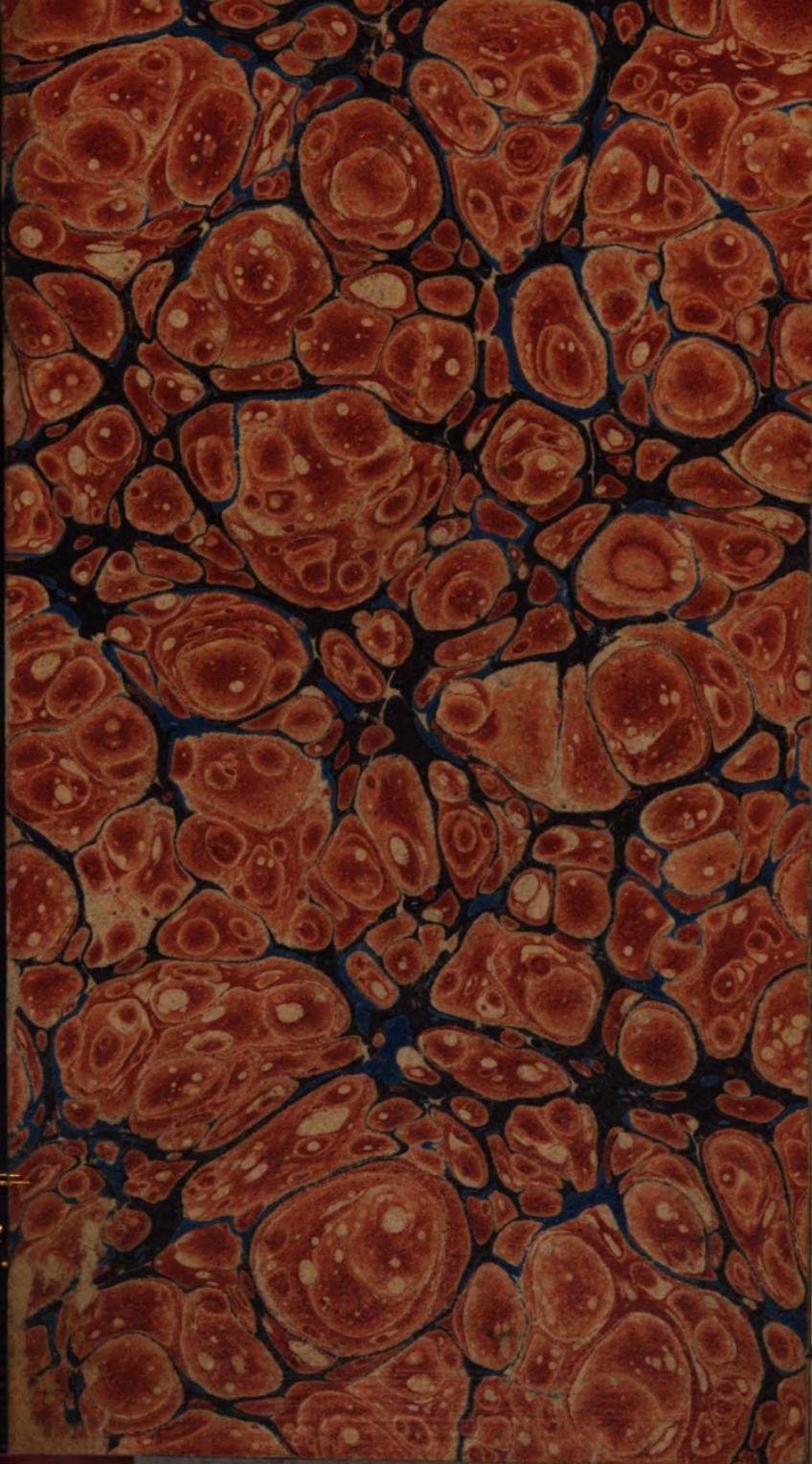
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With the Author's Compts

Star

CREATION,

A Sacred Poem.

By OXONIENSIS.

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Keep

C R E A T I O N.

(A Sacred Poem.)

BY OXONIENSIS.

BOOK I.

Non ego cuncta meis amplexi versibus opto;
Non, mihi si lingue centum sint, oraque centum,
Ferrea vox; ades, et primi lege littoris oram.

VIRGIL. *Georgy.* II. 42.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following stanzas commencing, so to speak, non *ab initio*, sed *antè initium*, present rather an excursive flight of imagination, than anything real or tangible, until, emerging from Chaos, the poem finds terra firma in the first chapter of Genesis.

In sending this his first book of "Creation" to its account, with all its acknowledged imperfections on its head, accompanied by the dangerous novelty of (as far as he knows,) an untried stanza, the author feels himself called upon to apologize in some sort for his apparent presumption, and to propitiate, if possible, the stickler for standard metrical rules against all rhythmical innovations :—and this he conceives he cannot better do than in the words of Lord Byron.

"I am aware," writes that illustrious Poet, "that Johnson has said, after some hesitation, that he could not prevail upon himself to wish that Milton had been a *rhymers*.

"The opinion of that truly great man, whom it is

also the present fashion to decry, will ever be received by me with that deference which time will restore to him from all. But with all humility, I am not persuaded that the *Paradise Lost* would not have been more nobly conveyed to posterity, not perhaps in heroic couplets, although even they could sustain the subject, if well balanced ; but in the stanza of *Spencer*, or of *Tasso*, or in the terza rima of *Dante*, which the powers of *Milton* could easily have grafted on our language."

How far, in his present attempt, the author has succeeded in imparting the fluency of blank verse to stanzas rhyming regularly, *non longo intervallo* between the recurrence of the corresponding rhyme in each separate stanza, he leaves to abler capacities than his own to decide : as also to what amount of originality of thought, &c., his muse may be entitled.

The occasional introduction of an entire line from *Milton* will not be attributed to a piratical propensity ; but, in truth, to a desire to balance and sustain the verse at concert pitch, as singers, inexpert, are wont to touch a note of a well-tuned instrument to sustain the failing powers of the voice.

CREATION.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE poem opens with a brief avowal of its subject; and an invocation of the Holy Spirit.

Nature extolled: nature's God more so. Anarchy and confusion of the elements before order was educed from chaos.

Satan in the bottomless abyss, foul, hideous, degraded;—tormented with flames, yet smiling with fiendish satisfaction at his having drawn down to perdition a third part of the angelic host.—He hears chaos bursting forth by Divine appointment preparatory to the reduction of all things to order and harmony: but inasmuch as only two points in space are supposed as yet to exist, (viz., heaven and hell,) he is at a loss to conjecture the cause of disturbance; but comes to the conclusion most in accordance with his wishes, that war may have again broken out in Heaven. Hell dismayed—Satan, alone unmoved, stands on an eminence, and brandishing a fiery dart, summons the infernal forces: reviews them, and wonders at his late defeat. Death as inflicted on the fallen angels compared with death as inflicted on man; shown to be worse, and beyond remedy. Hell's entire forces having as-

sembled, and silence prevailing, Satan harangues them in a long and impious speech.—With miserable sophistry, he questions the perfection of Jehovah's works ; assuming that, if he had been made originally perfect, he would have remained for ever incapable of transgression ; thence takes occasion to arraign the wisdom of God in that He had endowed immortal spirits with free-agency : which gift however, he for his own evil purposes still covets to retain.—Reminds his followers of their late failure ; and recapitulates the circumstances attendant on, and productive of his and their overthrow ; viz., jealousy of the power vested in the Son of God ; and wounded pride, in that he and they had been selected by the Omnipotent to proceed northward for the expulsion of Darkness, Silence, and Night, preparatory to the advent of the Son, for the creation of a universe which God had declared that He, through the agency of the filial Godhead, intended shortly to establish. Relates that while on this mission, he secretly resolved to gain over to him those powers to dislodge whom he had been commissioned ; and with them attempt to take Heaven by surprise : but that, with the thought, he found himself and them suddenly and entirely deprived of celestial light.—That they notwithstanding made the attempt, and were repulsed to hell, which he represents as a comet traversing space, and destined thereafter so to do, and to increase as well in bulk as numerically, objects of terror to the inhabitants of the intended worlds. Relates what he heard reported last in Heaven touching their future ; and calculates on six thousand years from the creation of the visible universe for the perpetration of his designs ; and expresses the devilish hope that, within the limit prescribed, they may be able greatly to mar God's works and the beauty of holiness. Chaos, now at its height, wakes up Silence and Night ; while Darkness, recoiling, falls back on Hell for protection ; who in her turn dismayed, rouses her fires to throw off the incubus, but to no purpose. Satan

feels retreating Darkness overshadow the infernal abyss : and now, for the first time, an indescribable sensation bordering on fear overtakes him, as, Chaos subsiding, he recognizes seraphic music, which allays the roar of anarchy and confusion. The gates of Heaven wide opening, the Son goes forth with myriad angels to create the worlds ; fanning with their wings incipient light. Satan, hovering on the outer confines of Night, watches the course of events.

Herald cherubs advancing, announce with the blast of a trumpet the Son's sacred mission :—at the conclusion whereof the heavenly host shout with joy unheard before or since ;—while the Son says "*Let there be Light !*"—which bursting forth, Hell, Night, and Darkness flee, Satan following ; and loud acclamations greet the universal beam, which, at God's bidding, touches the nebulous rising vapours :—they instantly dispart, and become lucid aqueous globes : these by the application of centrifugal force convolve, reflecting light and shadow ; by which division of Light from Darkness the first day's work is completed.

C R E A T I O N.

BOOK I.

I.

Of things primeval, and the fate
Of angels headlong hurl'd, and worlds up-rais'd ;
Of Him, on whom no mortal eye hath gaz'd,
And Him who sat

II.

At His right hand on high ;—who spake
The word ; and lo ! the universe !—who laid
The deep foundations of the hills, so stay'd
That none should shake

III.

The centre, Him, and these I sing.
And Thou, to whose prospective vision clear,
Things womb'd in dark futurity, appear ;
Mysterious spring

IV.

Of light¹! ere mountains were of old
 Brought forth, or earth, and the round worlds were made ;
 Spirit Eternal ! show Thyself :—array'd
 In softest fold

V.

Of dazzling, radiant robe of light,
² Veiling wherewith Thy face, to mortal man
 Thou giv'st the pow'r Thy wondrous ways to scan.
 With inward sight

VI.

Illume that portion which alone
³ May look upon thy countenance and live.
 That harp attune, which Thou didst deign to give,
 That not a tone

VII.

Discordant to Thy will may flow,
 Though great the height to which the Muse would soar,
 In numbers wellnigh never sung before,
 Of bard below.

VIII.

Nature, all wonderful art thou !—
 Yet, not so wonderful art thou, as He—
 Who held at first thy secret master-key,
 And holds it now.

IX.

⁴ In the beginning, heav'n and earth
He made : The earth was without form and void :
Darkness the deep o'er-shadow'd, as to hide
Creation's birth.

X.

There, giant Darkness strove to dwell ;
While heav'd the flood in sullen majesty,
Mingling its booming waves with earth and sky,
In troubled swell.

XI.

Earth, sky, and mighty sea were one
⁵ Rude, crude, incongruous mass :—to all intents,
Incestuous union of the elements,
Ere time begun..

XII.

Satan look'd up from hell, and smil'd :
For, ere the Word His work of worlds display'd,
Jehovah war on Lucifer had made :—
The latter, foil'd

XIII.

In his presumptuous enterprise,
Down with his angels hurl'd to lowest hell,
“ With hideous ruin and combustion ” fell,
No more to rise

XIV.

Waging dread war a second time,
 In open combat with th' Almighty Sire ;
 Scarr'd by the thunderbolts, and vivid fire
 Of God sublime !—

XV.

Yet there he stood amid the flame :—
 And though he winc'd with agony the while,
 He could disguise his torture with a smile,
 Cursing the name,

XVI.

And works of Heav'n's Almighty King :—
 Too proud to own defeat ;—too weak to rise
 With vain attempt to reach his native skies,
 On dragon wing.

XVII.

That form once godlike, now how chang'd !
 Those eyes that erst with heavenly lustre shone,
 Reflecting bright effulgence round the throne,
 From joy estrang'd,

XVIII.

And every thought that could aspire
 To deeds of high renown, look'd sneeringly
 Indignant on the deep abyss hard by,
 And lake of fire.⁶

xix.

The comely locks of auburn hair,
 That erst adorn'd his alabaster throat,
 And wanton o'er his shoulders wont to float,
 No longer there,

xx.

Had fouler foul'd hell's atmosphere,
 What time the lambent flames uprising, red,
 Lick'd the long tresses from the demon's head,
 Mid lurid glare

xxi.

Of sulphur and asphaltum. Oh !
 Sight, horrible ! appalling ! terror-crown'd !
 Lo ! as the blasted spirit turn'd him round,
 Gazing below

xxii.

On darkest realms of endless pain,
 His shapeless scalp, where late the ringlets grew,
 Reveal'd a covering of unfleshy hue,
 Dark as the brain

xxiii.

Beneath it :—while dilating wide,
 Deform'd, of ill-proportion'd length, and magnitude,
 A jagged ear did from his scull protrude
 On either side.

xxiv.

And as the fiend up-heav'd his wing,
 Imagination forc'd, could feebly guess,
 How passing hideous was the hideousness
 Of hell's foul king.

xxv.

The Seraph lustre all had fled :—
 The downy pinion, white as virgin snow,
 On his dark shoulder-blade had ceas'd to grow :
 There, in its stead,

xxvi.

Had sprung up, webb'd, and dragon-like,
 Of fin-like form, with sharp extremity,
 And harsh, as though not purposing to fly,
 But form'd to strike,

xxvii.

A glaz'd and philm-connected sail :—
 And as the fiend unclos'd each burnish'd fold,
 It rattled like the clattering of old,
 From coat of mail.

xxviii.

While on his back, and underneath,
 As if to fortify his tarnish'd frame,
 Or make it proof against eternal flame,
 Full many a wreath

XXIX.

Of polish'd scales around him twin'd—
 Yet wherefore dwell on each deformity ?
 Enough, perdition lurk'd within his eye,
 Hell in his mind.

XXX.

Leaning in meditative mood,
 On a projecting fragment of a rock,
 That had surviv'd the elemental shock,
 He view'd the flood

XXXI.

Of undulating flame below,
 Dashing its fiery foaming surf on high,
 As it would beard the everlasting sky,
 And overflow

XXXII.

Hell's boundary.—Thence he could see
 Th' extremest limit of the raging main :
 Those regions of intolerable pain,
 Ah ! never free

XXXIII.

From lamentation long, and loud :—
 Whence the foul smoke of torment doth ascend,
 In black begriming columns, without end,
 A fearful cloud !

xxxiv.

He listen'd, and again a smile
 Of fiendish satisfaction curv'd upon
 His livid cheek, as, ever and anon,
 The roaring pile

xxxv.

Of red-hot rocks and mountains, fed
 By streams of flowing naphtha, fiercer grew ;
 And hissing shells of fiery granite flew
 Around his head.

xxxvi.

Yet wherefore did his iron brow
 Resolve itself from its accustom'd frown ?
 Could pity soften those hard features down ?
 Stern monster ! no !—

xxxvii.

He heard the long and deep-drawn sigh ;
 The stifled breath, and agonizing groan
 Of keenest torture ;—to his heart of stone
 'Twas minstrelsy :

xxxviii.

He felt that he was not alone.
⁸ Ten thousand thousand blasted spirits fell,
 To share with him the miseries of hell,
 All,—all by one

XXXIX.

Dread deed of vengeance—be it so ;
 He smil'd to know that they, as well as he,
 Were doom'd to writhe to all eternity,
 In abject woe.

XL.

Again the arch-fiend turned him round :
 His keen and all-discriminating ear,
 Attentively erect, would seem to hear
 Some distant sound.

XLI.

It seem'd nor sound of hell, nor yet
 Of heav'n :—earth was not ;—nor had time begun :—
 Nor moon to wax, or wane ; nor joyous sun
 To rise, or set.

XLII.

God, with eternity and space
 Coeval, and the Son coequal reign'd
 O'er seraphim in heav'n :—Satan had gain'd
 That other place.

XLIII.

Call'd hell the dreadful : meet reward
 For him prepar'd, and his rebellious bands,
 Who 'gainst their God to raise conflicting hands
 Had vainly dar'd.

XLIV.

The rest,—what lay out-spun between
 These two, was dark, and drear vacuity.
 While looming lay beyond, infinity
 Immense, unseen,

XLV.

Incomprehensible. Then whence
 Those sounds? In the third heav'n where angels sang,
 The vaulted arch with “hallelujahs” rang :
 It was not thence

XLVI.

Aught of confusion could arise ;
 (For such it seem'd;) of flood, and crackling flame,
 Loud roaring winds, and tumbling rocks there came
 A deaf'ning noise.

XLVII.

’Twas Chaos :—by th’ Almighty will
 Sent forth to revel amid boundless space,
 Till order of confusion should take place,
 And all be still.

XLVIII.

Behind the pure empyreal ray,
 Till then, the essence and the source of things
 As yet unform'd, with all the hidden springs
 Of Nature lay

XLIX.

In slumber cradled.—At His nod,
 Earth, ocean, fire, and buoyant air, behold !
 Burst into mingled life ; and onward roll'd
 To greet their God,

L.

Who sent them with disorder rife ;
 That, from confusion, and a seeming curse,
 There might arise a splendid universe
 Of light and life !

LI.

It was a mystery in hell.
 Th' accursed spirits heard th' appalling sound,
 Down in the deepest depth of the profound ;
 But none could tell

LII.

The cause. .E'en Satan was deceiv'd,
 Despite his vaunted cunning :—from afar
 Distinguish'd, as he thought, loud shout of war ;
 And he believ'd,

LIII.

Nay worse, believing, lean'd on hope
 That other legions lost, had dar'd to raise,
 In lieu of homage, and harmonious praise,
 The bold war-whoop,

LIV.

And shout of loud defiance.—On,—
On roll'd the din, dread noises thundering,
Till Hell herself, appall'd, lay wondering
At what was done,

LV.

While dumb Expectancy and Fear
Stood mute; and Panic hover'd o'er that sea of fire.
Yet undismay'd Hell's proud rebellious sire;
For on his ear

LVI.

The loud artillery of heaven
Had ceas'd to roll terrific :—such the force
Of habit, and habitual intercourse
With mountains riv'n

LVII.

Asunder, and rocks split in twain !
Heav'n's ordnance, with its cataracts of red—
Hot thunderbolts, fell noiseless on his head;
Nor turn'd the brain

LVIII.

Of one, who erst had turn'd a host
Of heav'n-created troops: had not The Lamb,
(That same who since convers'd with Abraham,)
And th' Holy Ghost,

LIX.

And Michael, great Archangel, blown
 Their trumpets with a shrill and mighty blas
 And myriads numberless, from first to last
 Of angels, flown

LX.

From Light's remotest realms.—These came,
 Rallying around the standard of their king :
 Then charg'd ;—and headlong hurl'd the guilty thing,
 Cover'd with shame

LXI.

And dire confusion, him, and all
 His angels, into everlasting doom
 Of black despair and torture, to consume,
 Beyond recall

LXII.

Of grace, or hope of pardon, in
 The depths of desolation and distress :—
 To mercy lost ;—himself the merciless
 Father of Sin.

LXIII.

There, mid the myriads round his throne
 That throng'd, unknowing what those sounds might be,
 He, prince of that dark principality,
 Forth stood alone

LXIV.

On that bad eminence, un-mov'd,
 And un-affrighted. Not a look display'd
 Fear on his cheek, or nervousness betray'd.
 As tho' he lov'd

LXV.

Loud din of everlasting war,
 He brandish'd o'er his head a fiery spear,
 Bidding his hellish multitudes draw near ;
 Those from afar,

LXVI.

And those, the choicest of his band,
 His councillors, and firm associates,
 Who dar'd, with him, unbar the fast-clos'd gates
 Of heav'n, and stand,

LXVII.

Presumptuous, before the throne
 Of the Most High :—dar'd impiously require
 The crown and sceptre of th' Almighty Sire :
 Claim'd as their own

LXVIII.

The right, not privilege to reign ;
 And raising thro' wide heav'n their loud alarms,
 Dar'd e'en “defy th' Omnipotent to arms,”
 And conflict vain.

LXIX.

They came : the chiefest of the chief
 Captains of dire perdition :—a long line,
 Of what were once angelic forms divine ;
 Now worn with grief

LXX.

And furrowing torture, to the snade
 Of what they were :—albeit they did retain,
 Despite the trenches deep and broad that pain
 And fire had made

LXXI.

On their swoll'n visages, a look
 Of blasted godliness : a hideous kind
 Of beauty :—animation void of mind :
 Eyes that bespoke

LXXII.

Hatred with love com-mingling :—an
 Impiety half pious ;—and a smile,
 Masking a sullen seriousness the while
 Its coldness ran

LXXIII.

Curdling throughout the cheek.—They came.
 As, when December suns have made their grave
 On the smooth bosom of the western wave,
 And wrapt in flame

LXXIV.

Of parting glory all the sky
 Westward, and night draws down her sable veil
 O'er the broad lineaments of hill and dale,
 One might descry,

LXXV.

From out th' Atlantic driv'n, a host
 Of wild-fowl piloting beneath the moon
 Aërial voyage, stooping now, as soon
 T' o'er-spread the coast

LXXVI.

With no less dark impending frown,
 Than, if a thunder cloud should burst around,
 And pitchy streams descending, drench the ground,
 As they would drown

LXXVII.

The world with blackness ; such, so dark,
 So dense, from out the rolling molten lake
 Of hell, did those apostate angels take
 Their course, and mark

LXXVIII.

Their way from light of penal fire,
 Thro' darkness of despair, to that light, worst
 Of lights,—th' unholy countenance accurst
 Of him the Sire

LXXXIX.

Of Hell,—and Torment, Sin, and Death.
 They caine ; and circling round what seem'd a throne,
 In front whereof stood Satan, furious grown,
 Evolving breath

LXXX.

⁹ That, kindling, burst in flame from out
 His jaw, lik'ning a mimic hell ;—updrew
 Their mighty squadrons, halting in full view :—
 Then wheel'd about,

LXXXI.

And in one long extended line,
 By martial sounds inspir'd, came marching on,
 Full in the face of hell's infernal Sun,
 Who, if he shine,

LXXXII.

¹⁰ Blasts with the blackness of his light
 All things he gazes on.—Again they halt :—
 Now arms present, obsequious : now exalt,
 And praise the might

LXXXIII.

Of their bold leader.—He, the while,
 With scrutinizing eye each troop reviews,
 As onward it advances : then, pursues
 Thro' rank, and file,

LXXXIV.

Swift glance of strict inquiry :—and
 Struck with the dazzling show, he wonders how
 Erewhile he lost that field :—for even now,
 With a proud band

LXXXV.

Like that, the rebel thought he might
 Intimidate the High and Holy One :—
 But for the thunder of th' Eternal Son,
 And lightning bright

LXXXVI.

Of Michael, mightiest mid the host
 Of warlike cherubim.—Such vain pride coil'd
 Its chain around his heart, already foiled,
 Vanquish'd and lost

LXXXVII.

To all pretence of conflict. Hell,
 E'en from her lowest depth belch'd forth her flame ;
 And at each fiery eructation came
 Myriads of well-

LXXXVIII.

Pois'd spears :—in number only less
 Than those, innumerous, in realms of light :
 And, but for work of fire, wellnigh as bright
 As they.—Distress

LXXXIX.

Deep brand had seal'd upon the brow
 Of every blasted combatant :—Despair
 Had left indented melancholy there,
 Where late the glow

xc.

Of seraph lustre, not less clear
 Than the sun's orient beam at dawn of day,
 When first he gilds the mountain with his ray,
 Sat cloudless.—Here

xci.

Of beauty what surviv'd, but serv'd
 Too well to show from what exalted state
 Of glory, and from dignity how great,
 Angels had swerv'd

xcii.

In most unholy enterprise.
 As, when the soul from out the lifeless clay
 Hath vanish'd,—whither-ward, ah ! who can say ?
 The deep sunk eyes,

xciii.

And rigid countenance proclaim
 Dishonour, and discourse of silent death ;
 The features yet remain, as when God's breath
 Erewhile life's flame

XCIV.

Did fan ; and though the bosom heave
 Respiring now no more, pulsation gone ;
 The fingers ice-sicles, and the heart a stone ;
 One might perceive,

XCV.

Amid that wreck of nature dire,
 Of human form faint outline ;—though the light
 Fall dimly on the winding-sheet,—death's white,
 Yet sad attire ;—

XCVI.

So, neither had these faded lost
 All traces of what former excellence
 They late in heav'n display'd, though banish'd thence ;
 From the bright host

XCVII.

Angelic sever'd. Spirits they seem'd ;
 Spirits asunder parted from their soul.¹¹
 The vital flame that erst illum'd the whole
 Immortal, gleam'd

XCVIII.

No longer ; yet immortal they.
 For God, whose word is powerfully keen,
 Sharper than sword of double edge, the seen
 From th' unseen, yea,

XCIX.

Dissev'ring in an instant e'en
 The subtlest essences, howe'er unite ;
 Cannot annihilate those forms of light
 That long have been

C.

Existent ere the worlds began,
 And by His never changing will were made
 Un-dying from the first.—Spirits may fade,
 But never can

CI.

The soul immortal fail, or cease
 To be.—The soul that sinneth, it shall die
 To God, and heav'n ;—yet live eternally,
 Remote from peace

CII.

And happiness.—Angels have sinn'd ;
 And, sinning, reap'd sin's wages.—What is death
 To us, to them is worse :—They lose the breath
 Of holy mind,

CIII.

And that pure essence, which, nor pray'r,
 Nor after-thought, nor supplication join'd
 With penitential tears, when once consign'd
 To those realms where

CIV.

Light enters not, can e'er restore,
 Or kindle yet again to life and love.
 Better is death below, than death above,
 To live no more

CV.

In holiness ;—to live in sin
 Eternal, is the worst death souls can die.
 Now had from hell's remotest boundary,
 (E'en from within

CVI.

The deepest entrails of dark Night,
 Beneath whose mantle in eternal chains,
 Are still reserv'd for judgment, and its pains,
 ¹² Who did, despite

CVII.

The pure felicity they held
 In God's immediate presence, lose the estate
 Of their primeval glory, and elate
 With pride, up-yield

CVIII.

Their thoughts to wander from their own
 Blest habitations,) Satan's whole arm'd force
 In horrible array pursued its course,
 And round his throne

CIX.

Its ranks updrawn in silence. Then,
 Forth stood their haughty Chieftain, and thus spake.
 " Immortal warriors of hell's burning lake,
 Whom once again

CX.

" I now behold, as erst, brave friends
 In arms!—competitors for sov'reign sway
 In heav'n with me your chosen Liege; t' obey
 Whom, far transcends

CXI.

" In all-surpassing dignity,
 (Tho' somewhat tarnish'd now with many a wreath
 Of smoke, thro' many an age); serving beneath
 Th' all-seeing eye

CXII.

" Of Him who made us (so He says,)
 Perfect; with pow'r to stand sufficient; tho'
 With free capacity to sin, and go
 Astray from ways

CXIII.

" Of holiness.—¹³ How should this be?
 If we were perfect, what capacity
 For sin? if otherwise, and He on high
 Hath giv'n in free-

CXIV.

“ Choice, or free-agency, or free-will,
 Outlet perfection liberating ;—why
 T’ our ruin gave he us free-agency ?—
 Why ?—Wherefore ?—Still,

CXV.

“ Freedom bestowing, why did He
 Bestowing, bar the use ;—if use there were
 In th’ exercise ? O gift beyond compare !—
 Which, if it be

CXVI.

“ Us’d, in th’ using damns the user.
 O gift incomparable !—and yet withal,
 I would not now, He should that gift recal,
 Our proud Accuser ;

CXVII.

“ For though that boon hath prov’d a curse,
 It was a boon ; and we do value it :
 To us tho’ no intended benefit.
 Were it not worse

CXVIII.

“ To yield eternal servitude,
 With mean-born flattery, and hateful praise ?
 Worse were it not, the tedious hymn to raise,
 Hourly renew’d,

CXXIX.

“ Compulsory, not with consent
 Of free unshackled willingness alone ;
 His will perforce our choosing, not our own,
 Which he but lent

CXXX.

“ May be, in mockery ;—or gave
 To kindle discontentment at our lot,
 Or raise our liking to aspire to what
 It might not have ?

CXXXI.

“ What tho’ the pow’r to think, and feel,
 And, per-adventure, act in our behalf,
 Have prov’d a stumbling block, or broken staff
 Piercing our heel

CXXXII.

“ Withal ? What tho’ the trial show
 Our weakness, and His strength ? Neither had been
 Else known ; and ignorance of strength I ween,
 Is weakness ;—low

CXXXIII.

“ Subjection ;—fraud ;—deception vile ;—
 Mean cunning ;—sleight of hand ;—by which the less
 Is made to rule the greater : while distress,
 Degrading toil,

CXXIV.

“ Vile drudgery, endurance foul,
 Galling submission, and the down-turn'd eye
 Of fear, and obsequious servility
 Hold in control

CXXV.

“ Thrones, Dominations, Prinedoms, Pow'rs,
 Essential self-supporting Dignities,—
 Nought needing save the knowledge how to rise,
 Scale the high tow'rs,

CXXVI.

“ Forts and proud battlements of heav'n ;
 Een the strong citadel, lone place of strength :—
 Where thron'd Omnipotence reclines at length
 Secure, tho' riv'n

CXXVII.

“ Ere-while in twain heav'n's highest height
 With undermining jealousies and jars :—
 There laughs to scorn the meditated wars,
 And vaunting might

CXXVIII.

“ Of every disaffected band
 Doubting His sov'reignty. Thus much we know :—
 Knowledge from past experience gain'd of woe
 Dealt by His hand

CXXIX.

“ In thunder and devouring flame,
 What time we rais’d rebellion, in the hope
 To gain dominion o’er the boundless scope
 That owns His name

CXXX.

“ Supreme.—Ye do remember well ;—
 Oh, would that memory alone remain’d
 Of deeds that, well conducted, might have gain’d
 In room of hell

CXXXI.

“ And clanking chains Omnipotence !
 Lone, sole, exclusive sovereignty ;—with none
 To share my one supremacy :—nor Son,
 Nor influence

CXXXII.

“ Of sanctifying agency
 Proceeding from the Father and the Word.
 Ye do remember well, with one accord
 We met, on high

CXXXIII.

“ Proud banners waving thro’ the north :—
 Where ’neath the sable canopy of night,
 Yourselves, a third part of the sons of light,
 Myself led forth

CXXXIV.

“ To secret consultation.—Yes,
 Remember well ye do what urgent cause
 Constrain’d us there to violate His laws,
 Claiming redress

CXXXV.

“ Of grievous injuries begun.
 ’Twas on the morning of that hated day,
 We heard I AM, THE GREAT JEHOVAH say,
 ‘ Thou art my Son,

CXXXVI.

“ ‘ This day have I begotten Thee !’
¹⁴ To which of all the angels round His throne,
 Angels, ethereal essences, His own,
 Did ever He

CXXXVII.

“ ‘ In like parental accent speak ?
 ‘ Son ! bright, express resemblance of Thy Sire,*
 Eternal,—infinite, not made,—require *
 Of Me, nay seek

CXXXVIII.

“ ‘ Whate’er thou wilt ; through highest height
 Of heaven create, uphold, decree, command :—
 While universal space feeling Thy hand,
 Shall own thy might.

CXXXIX.

“¹⁵ Begin then, blessed Son, to plan,
 Mould, model, form, and poise the worlds.—Alone
 By Thee all things consist:—without Thee, none
 Or shall, or can

CXL.

“Endure.—Call forth the light!—yet stay.
 Not that on him we would Thy due confer,
 Still bring we to our work great Lucifer,
 Bidding his ray

CXLI.

“With holier rays consorting shine;
 Tho' weak his brightest beam compared with ours,
 And little lending with its mightiest pow'rs
 To light like Thine

CXLII.

“Ineffable, dear Son!—for Thou
 On all created things shalt shed benign
 Effulgence:—all shall own Thy light Divine,
 Thee blessing.—Bow

CXLIII.

“Down ye unnumber'd potentates!—
 Thrones, Dominations, Prinedoms, Powers, bow down!
 And ye your heads up-lift of old renown,
 Yea, oh! ye gates,

CXLIV.

“ ‘ Ye everlasting doors, unfold,
 Unbar your solid portals :—lo ! the King
 Of Glory enters.—Lucifer, thy wing
 For speed of old

CXLV.

“ ‘ Remember’d, raise.—Thyself array
 In polish’d armour of translucent light,
 Bestow’d what time (first trial of my might)
 I did essay

CXLVI.

“ ‘ To make the cherubim ; Thee first,
 And therefore brightest form’d.—Go then, bright beam ;
 Ethereal essence pure :—’twill well beseem
 Thee that thou durst

CXLVII.

“ ‘ In honour of my Son, (thy King ¹⁶)
 Now constituted, and anointed,) bear
 The standard He unfurls : thy deeds more dear,
 In that, dost bring

CXLVIII.

“ ‘ To th’ enterprise a willing mind :
 For sure thou art that same choice effluence,
 Ere-while created I and sent thee hence ;
 Nor com’st behind

CXLIX.

“‘ In bold emprise or high renown
 Thy brave compeers associate.—lo ! e’en now
 Our will and high resolve purpose to bow
 The heavens down,

CL.

“‘ And thro’ remotest darkness to
 Descend ; pervading with essential light
 All space.—Th’ extremest boundaries of Night
 Shall feel and know

CLI.

“‘ Our power.—Then when th’ eternal ray
 Existing uncreate, quintessence clear
 Of I AM forth shall issue ; and the drear
 Void waste our sway,

CLII.

“‘ Feeling, shall own ;—Thy King supreme,
 Thy Lord, Liege Lord of all created things,
 Whom henceforth call thou ever “ King of Kings,”
 And with esteem

CLIII.

“‘ And reverence due regarding, praise
 In holiest adoration ; Him I send
 Dominion-clad till latest time shall end :—
 Him, to upraise

CLIV.

“ ‘ Of worlds a goodly structure :—Him,
 Yon boundless vacuum to fill ; and grace
 With light of bright worlds numberless all space.
 Forth to the dim

CLV.

“ ‘ And silent north with speed repair,
 Thou and thy glittering myriad host : for still
 By custom, and Our un-disputed will
 Dwells darkness there,

CLVI.

“ ‘ Stern president ; whom forth I sent
 Of old, proud silence aiding, to maintain
 Inviolate that dull and drear domain,
 Till our intent

CLVII.

“ ‘ And fix’d resolve to people space
 With radiant orbs un-number’d ripe should grow ;
 And, ripening, swell to action.—Wherefore, go
 Bid him retrace

CLVIII.

“ ‘ Precipitant his footsteps down
 The dark unfathomable void whereout
 From first I summon’d him :—or if he doubt
 Thy might, or frown

CLIX.

“‘ Rebellion, thou shalt well approve
 Thy faithfulness, and with thy fierce array
 Of light shalt strike the rebel with dismay ;
 Gaining Our love,

CLX.

“‘ High sense, and approbation, due
 Reward and fitting thy true deeds.’—So spake
 Th’ eternal Father :—and so speaking, brake
 Swift from our view ;

CLXI.

“ And on bright-winged lightning sped
 Back to the pure empyreal ; on his throne
 Exalted state resuming :—nor alone
 He sat, but said ;

CLXII.

“‘ Hither, beloved Son ! in whom
 While thus beholding All Myself in Thee
 I am well pleas’d ; Son,—wherefore should it be
 That I resume

CLXIII.

“‘ Pre-eminence and sole renown ;
 Wielding eternal power for Mine Own sake ?
 Nay, sit Thou on My right hand till I make
 All things bow down,

CLXIV.

“ ‘ Thy will obeying ; nor him least
 Prostrate Thy foe now vaunting each vain deed,
 With lust insatiate fir’d in Heav’n to lead ;
 Whom now Thou see’st

CLXV.

“ ‘ Commission’d (bright prophetic ray
 Of things to come,) to go before Thy face
 Into yon frowning wilderness of space,
 To clear Thy way

CLXVI.

“ ‘ Before Thee, and dispel the cloud
 Of darkness ere Thy hand its work begin,
 Founding the worlds and all the tribes therein.’
 He spake so loud

CLXVII.

“ Those lavish words of love, that I,
 Curse on th’ acuteness of my hearing, heard
 The veriest cadence of each ling’ring word,
 Tho’ far on high

CLXVIII.

“ Beyond or noise of clattering hoof,
 Or rattling of our fervid chariot wheels
 He sat, and loud tho’ roar’d His thunder-peals,
 And lightning, proof

CLXIX.

“ Electric essence, flash’d ;—there fell
 Nought of the hated sound but reach’d mine ear.—
 And who—immortal Powers ! could tamely hear
 Such praise so well

CLXX.

“ Awarded ?— Instantly I knew,
 And felt had fled the circumambient glow
 Of dazzling glory from my darken’d brow.
 A deadly hue

CLXXI.

“ Of livid paleness over-spread
 My fading visage ;—round my heart there coil’d
 An icy coldness :—inwardly it boil’d :
 While to my head

CLXXII.

“ Uprose thro’ valve and secret pore
 Rank steam, foul scalding heat ; causing to spring
 Thoughts that outstrip the flight of fancy’s wing :
 Thoughts that before

CLXXIII.

“ Nor bud nor blossom e’er reveal’d
 Of deadly malice in angelic brain.
 For as we near’d the dark and shadowy plain,
 Where lay conceal’d

CLXXIV.

“ All shapeless phantom forms ;—methought,
 ‘ Tis well, Great Sire, in me Thou dost repose
 The confidence ere-while express’d :—who knows
 How danger-fraught

CLXXV.

“ To him thou lovest, and to Thee
 Who raisest Him to rank above His peers,
 And praisest to the loathing of all ears
 Thy trust may be ?

CLXXVI.

“ Thou reckon’st greatly on my love,
 And admiration of Thine excellence,
 High Potentate ;—yet worthier gifts dispense,
 If Thou would’st move

CLXXVII.

“ In me the zeal Thou claim’st ; nor send
¹⁷ Thine all but equal in the highest height,
 To conflict thus degrading to that light
 Thou late didst lend,

CLXXVIII.

“ Nay gav’st, what time Thy throne was dim,
 And lustre lack’d Thy courts and golden hall.
 For this did I illumine these and all
 Thy seraphim

CLXXIX.

“ ‘ Else dark till now?—For this did I
 The brightness of my brightest beam display,
 That heav’n itself recoil’d beneath my ray?—
 For this,—(O fie

CLXXX.

“ ‘ O’ th’ enterprise !) to grope from out
 Their secret hiding-place black Night and old
 Decrepid Darkness ? and with onset bold,
 And warlike shout,

CLXXXI.

“ ‘ And many a flaming brand affright
 Silence from off her throne, ere-while secure ;
 And but for Thee for ever to endure
 A queen by right

CLXXXII.

“ ‘ Of regal claim ; and all, when done,
 To gem with myriad lamps of burning ray
 Yon dreary waste, paving with light the way
 Of Him Thy Son

CLXXXIII.

“ ‘ Supreme?—Nay, back I hurl again
 To whence it flow’d, the gorgeous borrow’d beam.
 Bestow Thy gift on whom Thy choice may deem
 Fittest to obtain

CLXXXIV.

“ ‘ Thy special tenderness :—for me
 And these bright seraphim free choice I claim
 To side with darkness, and resign Thy flame.
 Nay rather we

CLXXXV.

“ ‘ Would turn Thy light to darkness black
 As night, than Night and her dark realms illume,
 Making their darkness light, to light up whom
 T’ obey is rack-

CLXXXVI.

“ ‘ -Tormenting torture.’—Saying so,
 I turn’d to gaze upon your squadrons bright,
 Array’d, methought, with pow’r and triple light
 As erst ;—when lo !

CLXXXVII.

“ Confusion dimm’d each low’ring eye !
 Back to its pure primeval fount had fled
 The radiant halo that enshrin’d each head :
 Nor less did I

CLXXXVIII.

“ Crest-fallen to your sight appear :—
 All faces from the foremost of the van
 To the last file had felt the withering ban,
 And far and near

CLXXXIX.

“ Blackness had gather’d :—such to blast
 His power who sees our ripen’d thoughts or e’er
 They germinate ; beneath whose vision clear,
 The present, past,

CXC.

“ And future roll reveal’d.—The rest
 Ye know ;—how pride, despite our alter’d state,
 Goaded us onward, till with hope elate,
 On, on we prest ;

CXCI.

“ And (Night and Darkness aiding all
 Our ill-concerted schemes,) in black disguise
 We thought to take Jehovah by surprise,
 And wind the pall

CXCII.

“ Of ever-during dark around
 • The living beam encircling His high throne !—
 Vain thought ; and rash.—With dread combustion down
 To this profound

CXCIII.

“ Unfathomable boiling sea
 Of never-dying, ever-trying flame,
 Condemn’d to torture and eternal shame,
 Revengeful He

cxciv.

“ With countless myriads on our rear
 Advancing, hurl’d us rank by rank, and file
 By file, till hell grew dark beneath the pile
 Heap’d on her clear

cxcv.

“ Red atmosphere of flame : for all
 Is flame : our every element is flame :
 Whate’er we touch, whate’er behold, the same
 Flame-belching ball

cxcvi.

“ Of inextinguishable fire !
 Wherewith propell’d throughout unbounded space,
 Alike unknowing or of time or place,
 Whither His ire

cxcvii.

“ That knows no bounds may drive us, we
 (So runs our sentence,) shall of might be hurl’d
 On the wide waste, a lone, wild, blazing world,
 Till time shall be,

cxcviii.

“ And orbs in-numerous appear,
 Thick-sown in space by His omnific hand,
 On whom hath now devolved the chief command
 Both far and near

CXCIX.

“ Of heav’n’s proud tow’rs and batteries.
 Then, (if report be true,) among those bright
 Forthcoming gems of pure celestial light
 Studding the skies

CC.

“ With sapphire beam, and rolling forth,
 Harmonious, their appointed course, our fate ¹⁸
 Will be to stray, of terror, torment, hate,
 And fiery wrath

CCI.

“ Sad emblem ;—‘ Comet’ call’d by some
 Who roll inferior ; but by all who dwell
 Superior, and behold our train nigh-gleaming, ‘ Hell ! ’
 Yes, Hell shall roam :

CCII.

“ ¹⁹ Hell shall increase and multiply :—
 Else where shall all the glory, pomp, and pride,
 Dev’lish, hereafter to be born abide ?
 Shall roam and fly

CCIII.

“ Thro’ space, terrific sign of ill ;
 Of war, blood, pestilence, and famine dire ;
 Ill-boding emblem of eternal fire
 To such as fill

CCIV.

“The new-pois’d worlds.—Mysterious blaze ;
 Wandering, irregular, beyond the sphere
 Of planetary systems rolling clear
 Their destin’d ways.

CCV.

“While exil’d from the Host of Heav’n,
 ’Twill be our change-less doom to traverse by
 Each rotatory orb that gems the sky,
 On, onward driv’n

CCVI.

“Unaxell’d and unhung for aye !
 Bandied from star to star with mighty force
 Repuls’d : and thus to urge a pathless course
 Until that day

CCVII.

“When, all His purposes fulfill’d,
 He in the hollow of His mighty hand
 Again shall gather what with ease He spann’d
 Or e’er He will’d

CCVIII.

“The universe !—Then unsustain’d
 Or by attractive or repulsive power,
 Down headlong falling from that fatal hour
 To depths ordain’d

CCIX.

“ Of old for our whole firmament
 Of blazing orbs ; deeper and deeper still
 Descending to those depths of endless ill
 Whose dark descent

CCX.

“ Not hell herself can fathom ; down,
 Down falling,—falling,—ever falling low,
 Yet reaching never hell’s extremest woe,
 But harder grown

CCXI.

“ To endure by growing torture, we,
 With all the myriads that by force or sleight
 We can extort, or filch from out His light,
 A fierier sea

CCXII.

“ And fiercer, deeper, wider far
 Than these wild waves and boiling surfs shall find ;
²⁰ Where chains ’neath darkness imminent shall bind,
 And anguish mar,

CCXIII.

“ Not nullify these forms.—Such death,
 Our first,²¹ their second doom, ’twas mine to hear
 Sentenc’d, at what time bringing up the rear,
 I stagger’d ’neath

CCXIV.

“ His lightning, with unerring aim
 Whirling a rifted mountain on my head :
 While yet He held within His right hand, red ²²
 With vengeance, flame

CCXV.

“ That, loos’d, had blasted and dispers’d
 In myriad fragments thro’ our panic host,
 Ten thousand rocks of adamant.—We lost
 That field ; our first,

CCXVI.

“ May be our last of undisguis’d
 And open war ; but He hath left us still,
 Of pow’r tho’ shorn, an unrelenting will,
 Uncompromis’d

CCXVII.

“ And unsubdued :—that what by force
 Of bold emprise erewhile we fail’d to obtain,
 By persevering fraud we yet may gain,
 Or check the course

CCXVIII.

“ Of His swift Word and stern decree.
 For, since not chance our birth-right may assail,
 In that immortal essences ne’er fail,²³
 We shall be free

CCIX.

“To wander known or in disguise,
 Thro’ twice three thousand years ; till time as yet
 Unborn shall have grown old,—the boundary set
 We’ll not despise,

CCX.

“Tho’ limited.—We much may do
 In twice three thousand years, ere we be chain’d
 A thousand years,²⁴—(the Conqueror hath ordain’d
 And set thereto

CCXI.

“ His seal,) we much may do within
 Th’ allotted space to fiery trial given,
 To make his heaven a hell, our hell a heaven.
 Yes, with our sin

CCXII.

“ Tarnish his Holiness ;—our main,
 Our fix’d resolve ; our first, our last desire ;
 That what He loves may know and feel hell-fire ! ”
 In such foul strain

CCXIII.

The Arch-fiend spake : while on his brow
 Insidious frenzy lowr’d ; and his stern eye ²⁵
 Talk’d yet a language rank of blasphemy
 And hate.—But now

CCXXIV.

Full Chaos rang. The mighty din
 Thro' all the empyrean round about
 The throne of God resounded; while the shout
²⁶ Of mountains in

CCXXV.

Th' interminable gulf of space
 Hail'd the rude winds that rush'd unheeding by
 To compromise the natural enmity
 Soon to take place

CCXXVI.

'Twixt flood and flame:—nor did they miss
 Their end.—Then fire, incestuous, courting sea,
 Burnt with unnatural lust; and secretly
 Indulg'd in bliss

CXXVII.

Unlawful.—From that incest sprung
 “Confusion worse confounded.” Damp with dry,
 And hot with cold (a strange fraternity,)
 United clung,

CCXXVIII.

By nature opposite. Mis-rule
 Sole universal law became. The springs
 Of crude, essential, uncompounded things
 Throughout the whole

CCXXIX.

Dark void of Chaos wander'd forth ;
And embryon atoms bursting into life,
No law confess'd, but swell'd the horrid strife,
Giving their wrath

CCXXX.

Full vent !—All noises wild and loud
Of heart-appalling panic and affright
Rang thro' the realms of Silence and old Night,
Rending the shroud

CCXXXI.

Of darkness to the centre ; who
That field so dearly fought rememb'ring well,
Backward recoil'd upon the verge of Hell
Close : while she too

CCXXXII.

Of gloom a weight unusual felt ;
And rousing all her flames, indignant, strove
The dark and shadowy incubus to move
That, hovering, dwelt

CCXXXIII.

With murky terrors brooding o'er
Her troubled breast.—Anon, hell's dauntless king
Felt darkness, tremulous, o'er-shadowing
Both sea and shore

CCXXXIV.

Of his domain ; and now first knew
 Sensation of insuperable dread.
 Affright with deadly pallor overspread
 His cheek, and flew

CCXXXV.

Straight to his heart. He knew not why,
 Nor could he fathom the deep source of fear ;
 Yet mid' that wild up-roar he seem'd to hear
 Soft harmony,

CCXXXVI.

Sweet music, such as angels play
 Seraphic, when they touch their harps of gold.
 Anon, voluminous and loud it roll'd ;
 Then died away

CCXXXVII.

To softest cadence low. And now,
 As at the sound enchanted, the loud roar
 Of Chaos half subsided ; and no more,
 With mighty throe

CCXXXVIII.

Convuls'd, the jarring atoms wag'd
 Dread war ; but lo ! a voice that seem'd to fill
 Void space with melody, said, " Peace !—be still ! "
 Wrath felt assuag'd,

CCXXXIX.

While mad Confusion from his ear
 Withdrew his finger, and entranc'd, stood mute
 At sound of soft recorder, harp, and lute,
 With voices clear

CCXL.

Blending.—Appall'd the devil stood,
 Transfix'd with horror pale: remember'd he
 Too well the touch of heav'n-born minstrelsy
 In that abode

CCXLI.

Where angels dwell, longer to doubt
 Whence the loud hymn proceeded. Now, more near,
 And nearer now advancing, he could hear
 The deaf'ning shout

CCXLII.

Go forth, and loud “hosannas” ring;
 As backward on their massive hinges roll'd
 Heav'n's ever-during doors of virgin gold,
 While forth the King

CCXLIII.

Of everlasting glory rode
 On the bright wings of cherubim, to quell
 The strife of Chaos, and scourge back to hell
 With fiery goad

CCXLIV.

That rabble rout, of whom were worst
 Disorder, Anarchy, and Discord loud.
 On the white bosom of a silvery cloud,
 Whose tint dispers'd

CCXLV.

Irradiation far and wide,
 They flew triumphant forth ; on myriad wings
 His gorgeous car sustaining. Straight He flings
 On either side

CCXLVI.

His gaze. Th' immeasurable abyss,
 Outrageous as a sea—dark, wasteful, wild,
 Mountains on waves, and waves on mountains pil'd,
 Now that, now this

CCXLVII.

Way rolling as in sport beheld,
 Nor ling'ring stay'd : but seraph-mounted, strode
 Onward the dim void cleaving, as He rode
 Aloft, impell'd

CCXLVIII.

By spirits numberless on wing
 Up-borne. What seem'd phosphoric light each blow
 Of downy pinion kindled : while below
 Shone glimmering

CCXLIX.

Far into Chaos black, prone, deep,
 The fitful flash reflected. Oft at night,
 When summer suns have wing'd their downward flight
 From out the steep

CCL.

O'er-arching vault of heav'n, is seen,
 As from flint fire, so from the stricken wave
 Bright sparkling foam up-heaving, as 'twould lave
 With red and green

CCLI.

Prismatic halo the dark prow,
 Light-ploughing on its way ; or brumal north
 Of solar beam devoid, discharging forth
 Coruscant glow

CCLII.

Of hyperborean splendour ;—such,
 Dazzling, of colour glorious, crysolite
 And topaz mingling glanc'd they, yielding light
 With every touch

CCLIII.

And stroke of motion'd wing. The dark
 Profound as on th' advancing myriads flew,
 More clearly now delineate rose to view.

Frowning and stark,

D 2

CCLIV.

In one huge mass, as gathering strength,
 What seem'd a promontory wide uprose
 Darkling, as if on coming light to close,
 Thro' the whole length

CCLV.

And breadth of immaterial space
 That intervening lay.—There, on black cloud,
 Circling the rugged mountain in a shroud
 Of dingy haze,

CCLVI.

Peering inquisitively thro'
 The glimmering doubtful void rode Satan, high—
 Hovering aloft.—In him expectancy
 Kindled no glow

CCLVII.

Of animating hope, to cheer
 Darkness with light,—within whom all was dim ;—
 Light was as darkness ;—darkness light, to him.
 Near, and more near,

CCLVIII.

The shining, winged squadrons drew :—
 While foremost in heraldic armour bright,
 Seraphs precursors of approaching light,
 Their trumpets blew,

CCLIX.

Proclaiming high announcement. “ Lo !
 He cometh ; lo ! He cometh to create
 New worlds : ²⁷ prepare we then His way, make straight
 His paths ;—that so

CCLX.

“ Th’ appointed Heir of all things, He,
 The brightness of God’s glory bright, nor less
 Of His Own Person image exact, ‘ express ;’
 All things by the

CCLXI.

“ Word of His pow’r upholding, may
 Go forth triumphant ; nor sit down on high
 At right hand of paternal majesty,
 (Being by sway

CCLXII.

“ Of just inheritance, and will
 Of God supreme, far more extoll’d than we
 Nam’d spirits minist’ring, ²⁸ of less degree,
 Angels,) until

CCLXIII.

“ With light, (ethereal essence pure,)
 He shall have throughly purg’d the dark, dim, dun
 Tartareous clouds from out this wide profun-
 dity obscure ;

CCLXIV.

“ Laid the foundations of the earth ;
 Out-spread the heavens, work of His own hand ;
 Secure by His decree ordain’d to stand,
 Whom right of birth ²⁹

CCLXV.

“ Upholds ; of whom, paternal love
 Naming Him ³⁰ ‘ First-begotten,’ thus doth say :
 ‘ Let all my angels praising, Him obey
 Whom I approve,

CCLXVI.

“ ‘ By whom I make the worlds.’ ” So sang
 The Bright, heraldic Morning Stars on high,
 While “ all the sons of God shouted for joy,” ³¹
 And onward sprang

CCLXVII.

Far into Chaos wide. Since then
 Not shout of Heavenly Host, when at His birth
 Glory to God in the Highest,—peace on earth,
 Good will t’wards men

CCLXVIII.

They sang, with that shout could compare,
 Or liken it ; though sound of loud acclaim
 Burst forth what time an angel breath’d His name
 ³² In Bethle’m, where

CCLIX.

Was born (good tidings of great joy,)
He, whom he styl'd "a Saviour, Christ, the Lord;"
Nor after shall be like it. Fire and sword,
The constancy

CCLXX.

And faith of martyrs trying, may
From millions, rob'd in white, Hosannas draw ;
(The elder thus expounded what John saw,
" These are they ³⁴

CCLXXI.

" Which out of tribulation great
Have come.") Nay, e'en th' incalculable throng
Of every nation, kindred, people, tongue,
T' enumerate

CCLXXII.

³⁵ Whose myriads son of mortal man
Essay'd not, these with shouts may rend the sky,
Daily and nightly chaunt doxology,
Thro' the wide span

CCLXXIII.

Of Heav'n's o'er-arching vault for aye,
Yet ne'er throughout that vaulted arch shall rise
Harmonious tones, or blending symphonies,
Or angels play

CCLXXIV.

On golden harps so touchingly
 To win from Triune God-head favour, love ;
 Or joy so great be felt in Heav'n above,
 (Tho' great the joy

CCLXXV.

Pronounc'd o'er sinner penitent,)
 As when, descending on that radiant cloud,
 The world-creating word rode thro' the shroud
 Of darkness ; rent

CCLXXVI.

In twain the gloomy veil of night ;
 Quell'd the loud roar of Chaos ; Discord made
 To cease, Confusion silencing ; and said,
 “ *Let there be light !* ”

CCLXXVII.

“ And forthwith, light ethereal, first
 Of things, quintessence pure, sprung from the deep ! ”
 And myriad rays conglom'rate, seem'd to leap,
 Flash forth with burst

CCLXXVIII.

Immediate, energetic, prone,
 Down thro' the dark immeasurable void ;
 Bright effluence of bright essence unalloy'd,
 From Him, alone

CCLXXXI.

The Fountain-head, the living source
 Of light (for God is Light,) proceeding.—One
 All-in-all swift beam, (shadow was none,)
 Darted perforce

CCLXXXII.

Sheer through whate'er opaque, or black,
 Or dim, or low'ring erst had frown'd, and lo !
 Light was the Universe!—Hell felt the blow,
 And staggering back

CCLXXXIII.

Recoil'd ; and night and darkness fled.
 As morning clouds and vapours roll away
 At Heaven's bright light dispersing,—so fled they.
 Him over-head,

CCLXXXIV.

Satan high hov'ring they descried,
 And signall'd loud :—for still on night's last verge,
 Coasting what seem'd half cloud, half billowy surge,
 Th' apostate tried

CCLXXXV.

With lab'ring wing to fly or swim
 For equipoise. Straight, at the signal given,
 Like lightning down he darts ! So, down from Heav'n
 The Saviour him

CCLXXXIV.

Saw fall, what time the seventy
 Appointed since, with joy returning said,
 "Lord ! e'en the devils unto us are made
 Subject thro' Thy

CCLXXXV.

"Great Name !" ³⁶ Him saw the Saviour fall,
 Down hurl'd by truth from bright'ning mind of men,
 As, at the first light-strick'n, he vanish'd then ;
 Vanish'd !—With all

CCLXXXVI.

His might one desperate plunge he made
 Into the desolate, dreary, dim profound ;
 And fiends and forms of darkness circling round,
 Him back convey'd

CCLXXXVII.

To hell.—Then straightway rose, as one,
 Th' angelic choir. "Light ! Glorious Light!" they sang.
 Offspring of Heav'n first-born, Thee long ere sprang
 To life the Sun,

CCLXXXVIII.

Or ether pure, serene, with blue
 Expanse outstretch'd, o'er-arching lay.
 Before the Heav'ns thou wert,—and with bright ray
 Thou didst endue,

CCLXXXIX.

As with a mantle delicate,
 The rising, nebulous, con-globing dew,
 That, at thy finger-touch disparting, flew
 Precipitate,

CCXC.

Infinity with huge drops clear
 Be-spangling; whereof anon the worlds He made,
 With light, intensely multiplied, array'd.
 God saw appear

CCXCI.

The light :—³⁷ saw that the light was good.
 Good in itself: essential.—For as yet
 He had nor star nor constellation set
 In Heav'n.—A flood

CCXCII.

Diffusive, all-pervading, gleam'd
 Above, below, within, without, around,
 The nebulous globes encircling, as it wound
 Its course and stream'd

CCXCIII.

With ether luminous.—Now all
 The watery globes hung pendulous in air
 Self-balancing; but motion none was there,
 Till at His call

CCXCIV.

Centrifugal force up-leaping bold,
 Struck back a ponderous wedge, and swift let fly
 The main-wheel of the Universe on high,
 And forthwith roll'd,

CCXCV.

Each on his separate axis driv'n,
 Orbs dazzling infinite!—Convolving, they
 Now on each other gaze; now, turn away
 To outer heav'n

CCXCVI.

Their face;—now, oscillating, smile;
 Now, slow retiring, frown. God from His throne
 Them greeting saw, as each on other shone,
 Well-pleas'd the while

CCXCVII.

With alternating interchange
 From darkness light dividing.³⁸—God the light
 Call'd day, and the darkness He called night.
 Thus they, their range

CCXCVIII.

Dividing, each pursu'd his way
 Sep'rate, one yielding light, the other shade.
 “And the evening and the morning God had made,
³⁹ Were the first day.”

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

N O T E S.

¹ “Ere mountains were of old
Brought forth: or earth and the round worlds were made;—
Spirit eternal! shew Thyself.”

The eternity of the Godhead is aptly chosen as a subject of devout contemplation by the Psalmist in that affecting Psalm which, by implication, reminds us at the same time of man’s transitory state, when we consign the body to its kindred dust.

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” Ps. xc. 2.

“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” Ps. xc. 4.

² “Veiling wherewith thy face, to mortal man
Thou giv’st the pow’r thy wondrous ways to scan.”

The exceeding brightness of His glory, so often represented in Scripture as unapproachable, may be conceived by this figure of Jehovah veiling that which is brighter than light, with light itself; and making light (*i. e.* mental light) the only medium through which he is discernible by man’s nature. We cannot, by searching, find out God—much less can the corporeal gross perception of man behold him. Through the mind alone, conformed to the image of his Son, can we approach even in thought his glory; or form any conception of his attributes.

³ “I lumine that portion which alone
May look upon thy countenance and live.”

The invisibility of the Deity is everywhere insisted on in Scripture. “No man hath seen God at any time.” 1 John iv. 12.

"Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, *nor seen his shape.*" John v. 37. "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live." Exod. xxxiii. 20.

⁴ "In the beginning, heaven and earth
He made: the earth was without form and void:
Darkness sat on the deep," &c.

These words, with very slight variation, are the words of Scripture. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep." Gen. i. 1.

⁵ "Rude, crude incongruous mass."
"Rudis indigestaque moles."

⁶ "Look'd sneeringly
Indignant on the deep abyss hard by,
And lake of fire."

Hell is described as a lake of fire by St. John, Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10; but the final receptacle of hell itself and death, as also of murderers, and all whose names are not found written in the book of life, has also the same appellation. Rev. xx. 14, 15; xxi. 8. Satan is here supposed to be looking on this nether abyss.

⁷ "Whence the foul smoke of torment doth ascend,
In black begrimming columns without end."

The eternity of the torments of the damned, is thus represented. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Rev. xiv. 11.

⁸ "Ten thousand thousand blasted spirits fell,
To share with him the miseries of hell."

The term, *ten thousand thousand*, does not mean to imply any exact numerical amount; but is to be taken indefinitely, to show the vast extent of that defection: as will appear from a subsequent stanza.

"Hell

E'en from her lowest depths belch'd forth her flame:
And with each fiery eructation came
Myriads of well-
Pois'd spears! in number only less
Than those *innumEROus* in realms of light."

⁹ “Evolving breath
That, kindling, burst in flame from out
His jaw; likening a mimic hell.”

A like figurative expression is used by the Psalmist as significant of God's wrath. “There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled at it.”
Ps. xviii. 8.

¹⁰ “Who if he shine
Blasts with the blackness of his light
All things he gazes on!”

A strong figurative expression, denoting the exceeding blackness of the prince of darkness. This and many other similar expressions are borne out by such passages in Milton as the following:

“A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace *flam'd*:—yet from those flames
No light; but rather *darkness visible*,
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe.”

Paradise Lost, Book I.

¹¹ “Spirits they seemed;
Spirits asunder parted from their soul!”
* * * * *

“For God, whose word is powerfully keen,
Sharper than sword of double edge,” &c.

The power and ubiquity of the Spirit of God are variously represented in Scripture. “His word runneth very swiftly.”
Ps. cxlvii. 15. Its discriminating and thought-searching might is beautifully conveyed to the mind in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, iv. 12, 13. “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and *sharper thdn any two-edged sword*; piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul and spirit*; and of the joints and marrow: and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

¹² “Who did despite
The pure felicity they held

In God's immediate presence lose th' estate
Of their primeval glory," &c.

"And the angels which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude, v. 6.

¹³ "How should this be?

If we were perfect,—what capacity
For sin? if otherwise," &c.

Specious reasoning this, and to be expected from such a source. God, doubtless, made the angels perfect in their nature, but like every order of intelligence, free to stand or fall. Whereas Satan assumes that he was created essentially perfect, and *incapable of falling*.

"Ingrate! he had of me

All he could have:—I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood,—tho' free to fall."

Paradise Lost, Book III. 97.

¹⁴ "To which of all the angels round his throne,
Angels, ethereal essences his own,

Did ever he

In like parental accent speak?"

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" Heb. i. 5.

"Son! bright express resemblance of thy sire," *

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," &c. Heb. i. 3.

* * * Require *

Of me, nay seek

Whate'er thou wilt."

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Ps. ii. 8.

¹⁵ "Begin then blessed Son to plan
Mould, model, form, and poise the worlds: alone
By Thee all things consist: without thee, none
Or shall,—or can
Endure."

"And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands." Heb. i. 10.

¹⁶ “In honour of my Son (thy king
Now constituted and anointed,) bear
The standard he unfurls.”

“Hear all ye angels! progeny of light!
Thrones, Dominations, Prinedoms, Virtues, Pow’rs!
Hear my decree which unrevok’d shall stand.
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed whom ye now behold
At my right hand. Your head, I him appoint.”

Paradise Lost, Book V. 500.

¹⁷ “Nor send
Thine all but equal in the highest height,
To conflict so degrading,” &c.

“What matter where,—if I be still the same,
And what I should be: *all but less than he,*
Whom thunder hath made greater?”

Paradise Lost, Book I. 256.

¹⁸ “Rolling forth
Harmonious their appointed course.”

Strange, that Satan should have such foreknowledge of the order and harmony of the coming universe: but having been told before his fall that it was Jehovah’s “intent, and firm resolve, to people space with radiant orbs unnumbered,” he is here made not only to express further knowledge of affairs, but to speak prophetically of his own intended endeavours to mar the harmony and beauty of the work, and of his subsequent descent into everlasting perdition.

¹⁹ “Hell shall increase and multiply:
Else, where shall all the glory, pomp, and pride
Dev’lish, hereafter to be born, abide?”

“Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it.”—Is. 5, xiv.

²⁰ “Where chains, ‘neath darkness imminent, shall bind,
And anguish mar,” &c.

St. Jude describes the angels that kept not their first estate, as “reserved in everlasting chains *under darkness*, unto the judgment of the great day.”—Ver. 6.

²¹ “Such death,
Our first, their second doom, ‘twas mine to hear
Sentenc’d,” &c.

“And Death, and Hell, were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death.”—Rev. 20, xiv.

²² “While yet he held within his *right hand*, red
With vengeance, flame,” &c.

“Et rubente
Dexterâ sacras jaculatus arces
Terruit urbem.”—

HOR. OD. I. 2, 23.

²³ For since not chance our birthright may assail
In that immortal essences ne’er fail,” &c.

The eternity, and indestructibility of Satan and his associates in guilt is an awful contemplation; and but that we have the assurance of inspiration that he and they shall eventually be chained down to all eternity in the bottomless abyss, we might well despond lest, through their agency, *evil* should extend without limitation. That the Omnipotent could not annihilate Satan who shall say? Wherefore not?—he created him.—These are matters beyond our grasp;—we can only suppose an utter extinction, or extermination, as far as his influence over the universe may extend, though as regards himself, not annihilation—that he should be beyond the reach of annihilation, must be assumed on the hypothesis that God originally created him indestructible, and ordained from the first that he should continue so.

Milton makes Satan presume on a like indestructibility.

“Since *by fate*, the strength of God’s
And this empyreal substance *cannot fail.*”
And Beelzebub is made to take up the same line of argument.

"As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish ;—for the mind and spirit remain
Invincible : and vigour soon returns,
Tho' all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallow'd up in endless misery."

* "We much may do
In twice three thousand years ;—ere we be chain'd
A thousand years ;—"

From the first moment of his fall Satan appears to have been aware of his ultimate doom, as well as of certain intermediate occurrences. The Devils are represented in Scripture, as "*believing*," and "*trembling*," at the knowledge of the final catastrophe. In St. Matthew's Gospel the infernal spirits are represented as saying—"What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us *before the time?*" implying that they had a knowledge, or idea of a set time, for the duration of their abominable, although limited machinations.

* "And his stern eye
Talk'd yet a language rank of blasphemy
And hate."

Phrenologists have given to the *eye* the appellation of *the organ of language*.

* "While the shout
Of mountains, in
Th' interminable gulf of space," &c.

Inanimate objects, and the silent works of nature, are frequently in the figurative language of Scripture described not only as capable of sensation, but of articulation likewise.

"Deep calleth unto deep—at the noise of thy water spouts."—Ps. xlii. 7. "The Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon :—he maketh them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn."—Ps. xxix. 5, 6. "The mountains also, and the hills, shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall *clap their hands.*"—Isaiah lv. 12.

"The valleys, also, shall stand so thick with corn, that they shall *laugh and sing.*"—Ps. lxv. 12.

²⁷ "Prepare we then his way—make straight
His paths," &c.

John in the wilderness, preparing the way, and making straight the path for the advent of Christ, by preaching repentance, and enlightening men's minds, is not inaptly foreshadowed by the herald angels, precursors of approaching light.

²⁸ "Far more extoll'd than we
Nam'd spirits ministering ;—of less degree,—
Angels,"—

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all *ministering spirits?* sent forth to *minister,*" &c.—Heb. i. 14.

²⁹ "Whom right of birth
Upholds."

"Being made so much better than the angels as he hath by *inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they."—Heb. i. 14.

³⁰ "Naming him first begotten, thus doth say,
'Let all my angels praising, him obey
Whom I approve.'"

"And again, when he bringeth in the *first begotten* into the world he saith, 'And let all the angels of God worship him.'"—Heb. i. 6.

³¹ "While all the Sons of God shouted for joy."

"Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof when the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy."—Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

³² "Glory to God in the highest,—peace on earth,
Goodwill t'ward men
They sang."

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.'"

Luke ii. 13, 14.

• ³³ “What time an angel breath'd his name
In Bethlehem, where

Was born (good tidings of great joy)

He, whom he styl'd a Saviour, Christ the Lord !”

“And the Angel said unto them, fear not. For behold ! I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people—for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke ii. 10, 11.

³⁴ “The elder thus expounded what John saw :

‘These are they

Which out of tribulation great

Have come.’”

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, ‘What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?’—And I said unto him, ‘Sir, thou knowest.’—And he said, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”—Rev. vii. 13, 14.

³⁵ Nay—e'en th' incalculable throng
Of every nation, kindred, people, tongue,”

“After this, I beheld, and lo ! a great multitude which no man could number' of all nations and kindreds, and tongues, stood before the throne,” &c., “and cried with a loud voice saying, ‘Salvation to our God and all the angels worshipped God saying—‘Amen ! blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God, for ever, and ever, Amen.’”—Rev. vii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

³⁶ “So down from Heav'n
The Saviour him
Saw fall,—what time the seventy,
Appointed since, with joy returning said,
‘Lord ! e'en the devils unto us are made
Subject thro' thy
Great name !’”

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.’ And he said unto them,—‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.’”—Luke xix. 17, 18.

²⁷ "God saw appear
The Light : saw that the light was good,
Good in itself, essential.—"
"God saw the Light that it was good."—Gen. i. 4.

²⁸ "God from his throne
Them greeting saw, as each on other shone ;
Well pleas'd the while
With alternating interchange
From darkness light dividing."

"And God divided the light from the darkness."—Gen. i. 4.
As the firmament with its sun, moon, and stars was a subsequent creation, it is not easy to conceive what is meant by this division of light from darkness,—especially if, as described, the effect of the first mandate, "Let there be light," was *universal light*. How far the disparting and convolving luminous nebulae may go to solve this nubilous question, I leave to scientific and philosophic minds to decide.

²⁹ "God the light
Call'd day,—and the darkness he called night.
Thus they," &c.

"And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night,—and the evening and the morning were the first day."

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